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PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE OF GOLD

Dec. 23, 1851

~~Feb. 17, 1852~~ - Dec. 14, 1853

(under Federal Contract with CURTIS, PERRY & WARD)

AUGUSTUS HUMBERT, U. S. ASSAYER

On February 16, 1852, the Daily Alta California contained the following notice:

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Some time later, apparently after the issue of the perfect date 1852 AUGUSTUS HUMBERT "Eagle," Curtis, Perry & Ward decided to PUBLICLY conduct operations under the modified name of the United States Assay Office of Gold. Obviously, the new partners wanted to strengthen first by reorganization of their firm, and later by name, their ~~prerogative~~ PREROGATIVE to operate as an authorized government establishment, utilizing a Treasury Department appointed assayer, and to issue gold coins and ingots bearing the stamp and devices of the United States.

Early in the fall of 1852, the coins, "coin ingots" (slugs) and ~~ingots~~ BARS of the Assay Office were refused at the Custom House in San Francisco, and much confusion and embarrassment to business ensued. On September 4, 1852, the Treasury Department informed Mr. King, the Collector of the Port of San Francisco, that the authority previously given him to receive the gold issues of the Assay Office in payment of dues to the Government, was revoked. This action of the Treasury Department, was based upon the second section of the Civil and Diplomatic bill, approved August 31, 1852, by the Congress. Actually, this move of the Treasury Department and the enactment of the bill upon which it was based, was caused by a combination of legal confusion and petty Whig, Democrat politics. After much discussion and considerable correspondence, it was decided that if the United States Assay Office of Gold issued coins and ingots to conform with the U. S. Mint Standard of 900 thousandths, such a ~~coinage~~ MINTAGE could, in effect, continue as legal tender and be acceptable for all payments and dues to the U. S. Government.

This arrangement, was more or less an uneasy truce. The United States Assay Office of Gold was considered by everyone concerned a temporary substitute for a U. S. branch mint. The problem of meeting with the Mint Standard (and U. S. Coinage laws) continued to be solved by the

Assay Office in 1853, by the issuing of gold of 900/1000 fineness; only a meagre quantity of 1853 gold bore the stamp "884 Thous." Early in 1853, the United States Assay Office of Gold revised its percentage charge on coining gold and announced that $10 and $20 pieces could be had just about as cheaply as could the same amount in fifty dollar slugs. This, in effect, was the end of the relatively unpopular Octagons. The monthly report submitted (until the end of 1853) by the Assay Office of Gold to the Treasury Department, indicated that approximately 23,800 fifty dollar "coin ingots" or slugs were coined from January 3, to February 21, 1853, and none thereafter, for the reason just given. There is no doubt that the fifty dollar pieces struck in January and February, 1853, in quantity, were the octagonal ones from dies dated 1852, 900 Thous.

Edgar H. Adams, on p. 50 of his Private Gold Coinage of California, Part II, reproduced the "new tariff of coinage recently issued by the Assay Office," from a San Francisco newspaper. This is the table of rates referred to above, where the Assay Office of Gold revised its percentage charge breakdown, making the lower denominations lower in cost for a given amount. The figure given "For melting and assaying into bars" ~~is~~ WAS 1%. This percentage ~~fee,~~ CHARGE, the lowest basic service fee of the United States Assay Office of Gold, would indicate that ingots or bars, while possessing little popularity in comparison with coin or "coin ingots," were an attractive proposition price-wise. On this basis, if no other, bars were manufactured and issued, at least in moderate quantity. Notice of the dissolution of Moffat & Co., as published in the San Francisco Herald, Feb. 16, 1852, mentioned that the newly formed firm of Curtis, Perry & Ward (U. S. Assay Office of Gold), would issue high denomination bars, as well as the lesser denomination items long familiar to collectors. The notice read in part: "The following denominations of coin are now authorized to be issued by the Treasury Department from the Assay Office: Ten Dollars, Twenty Dollars, and Fifty Dollars; also bars of Five Hundred Dollars and One Thousand Dollars...." That these high denomination bars were issued and used we have little doubt, but chances are none ~~have~~ HAS survived to this day. However, we now do know that lesser denomination bars were made and issued, ranging in marked value from $7.26 (an USAO of Gold "Assay Conversion Ingot") to $200 (a standard issue, the highest ~~denomination~~ DENOMINATIONAL unit KNOWN, intended ~~to be used~~ FOR USE as ~~money,~~ LEGAL TENDER, bearing the stamp of the United States).

Research in the National Archieves, conducted for a period of several years, has unearthed data concerning the Provisional Mint at San Francisco under both Moffat & Co. and Curtis, Perry & Ward, unknown to Edgar H. Adams or any other authority heretofore. Perhaps the most startling fact revealed is that the United States Assay Office of Gold issued bars (as differentiated from the officially used term of ingots for coin and "coin ingots") from Oct. 1, 1852 to the end of October, 1853, which confirms conclusions independently reached by research and discoveries in the field. These bars were clearly called such in the reports from San Francisco to Washington; the actual denominations were never specified.

Amounts issued, by the month, were tabulated as follows:

Oct. 1852	$300,275.21		April, 1853	$609,229.78	
Nov.	313,043.40		May	555,344.93	
Dec.	331,999.66	Total $945,318.27	June	687,561.02	
			July	434,657.84	
Jan. 1853	262,527.66		Aug.	327,856.15	
Feb.	340,848.13		Sept.	647,143.15	
Mar.	298,295.44		Oct.	856,014.24	Total $5,019,478.34

The total figure of almost Six Millions of dollars for the thirteen month period is highly significant, as is the odd amounts reported each month.

Probably the most revealing series of discoveries in the long history of American Numismatics took place within recent years, through contact being made with a direct descendant of an employee of the United States Assay Office of Gold. This gentleman, now in his eighties, revealed that his great-uncle, while associated with Augustus Humbert, managed to secure a highly representative grouping of the produce of the Assay Office of Gold, including several pattern pieces, and even trial strikes in silver, copper and lead. Apparently, at the closing of the Provisional Mint at San Francisco, before its reopening as a branch mint, this Curtis, Perry & Ward employee took with him many remainders, those that were not destroyed or returned to the parent mint at Philadelphia.

We have been informed that this direct descendant of a San Francisco Pioneer coiner turned in a large quantity of common U. S. Assay Office double eagles in 1933, and distributed some of the better specimens to friends and relatives. Many of the latter have been traced down, and are here reported for the first time. Much research has yet to be done concerning the myriad activities of the United States Assay Office of Gold, as indicated by these fabulous discoveries, and by the unique run of Moffat & Co. and Assay Office trial pieces in the

Joseph C. Mitchelson collection, located in the Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn. Also, the lot of dies, reported by Adams to be "in the Philadelphia Mint cabinet," on p. 106 of his Private Gold Coinage of California, Part IV, should be re-examined in this connection.

The United States Provisional Mint, operated under contract by Curtis, Perry & Ward, was a large and extensive operation, as shown by a reference to it in the Daily Alta California, of March 2, 1853: "The machinery made use of by Messrs. Curtis, Perry & Ward is of the same description, made by the same mechanics, and is as perfect in all its parts, as that of the United States Mint at Philadelphia. The capacity of their press is such as to enable them to coin $360,000 in $10 pieces and $720,000 in $20 pieces per day, and it keeps up with their facilities for drawing, cutting, and adjusting by being worked only a few hours per day. The mechanical execution of the coin itself is fully equal to that of the United States Mint, as will be seen by a comparison of the coins. Too much credit cannot be awarded to Messrs. Curtis, Perry & Ward for the radical change in the facilities for coinage offered by them to the people of this State while at the same time it is advantageous to them personally." Flattering reports of this caliber, undoubtedly did much to assist the two surviving members of the firm to eventually sell their establishment to the Federal government at a price far in excess of its then recognized value.

The Act authorizing the establishment of the San Francisco Branch Mint was passed by Congress on July 3, 1852. A date was set for the submission of mint contract proposals, but since no agreement was made within the advertised date, it was extended on March 3, 1853. Finally, the contract was given to a Mr. Butler, at his bid of $239,000. It was subsequently bought by Mr. Curtis, under which the mint building on Commercial Street was conveyed to the United States for the sum of $285,000. This amount included about $25,000. for additions and extensions to the west side of the original structure, which originally was forty feet wide and sixty feet deep. The ~~old~~ Assay Office mint building was erected in the latter part of 1850, and was of brick, three stories high, covered with cement and fireproofed. Mr. Curtis attended to the renovation of the building, while Mr. Perry made the arrangements for an additional $50,000. worth of machinery. Partner Ward had meanwhile died. The old Provisional Mint went into operation as the United States Branch Mint at San Francisco on April 3rd, and commenced striking double eagles, of the national design, on April 15, 1854. The first Superintendent of the Mint was

L. A. Birdsall, appointed to the office in June, 1853. John Huston was the first minter, and A. Haraszthy, the first assayer. The original Moffat & Co. United States Assay Office continued as the U. S. branch mint from 1854 to 1874. In the latter year, the Commercial Street establishment was reconstructed for the Sub-Treasury and other government offices. The old mint site was occupied as a Sub-Treasury from October, 1877, to April 18, 1906, when the building was finally destroyed in the famous San Francisco earthquake and fire.

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PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE OF GOLD
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(under Federal Contract with CURTIS, PERRY & WARD)

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PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE

Feb. 1, 1851 - ~~Feb. 16, 1852~~ Dec. 22, 1851

(under Federal Contract with MOFFAT & Co.)

AUGUSTUS HUMBERT, U. S. ASSAYER

Early in 1850, New York and California representatives in Congress attempted to have branches of the United States Mint established in their respective cities. When it became obvious that there was little or no chance of passing this branch mint bill, the first session of the 31st Congress, on September 30, 1850, created a temporary or provisional mint in San Francisco, with the support of the entire Californian congressional delegation. This establishment, called the United States Assay Office, was created as a compromise entity, to take the place of a regular government branch mint, and its creation was supported by the western congressmen only when it became evident that the bill for a California mint could not be quickly passed.

Congress, in its action, authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to contract with "some well-established works now in successful operation in California" to manufacture gold ingots with the fineness and value stamped thereon, under supervision of an officer styled "United States Assayer" who would be appointed for that purpose. Moffat & Co., of San Francisco, composed of John L. Moffat, J. R. Curtis, P. H. Perry, and S. H. Ward, the most reputable assayers and private coiners in the new state, received the Treasury Department contract. Augustus Humbert, a New York City watch case maker, was appointed United States Assayer. The Moffat firm, upon securing the government minting franchise, immediately ceased the manufacture of their own private coins, and made arrangements for larger quarters and facilities to accommodate the contemplated increase in business. They obtained a site on ~~Montgomery~~ THE NORTH SIDE OF COMMERCIAL Street, ~~now between Clay and Commercial Streets,~~ ABOUT SIXTY FEET WEST OF MONTGOMERY STREET, and commenced production on January 30th or 31st, 1851, a day or so before the announced opening of the United States Assay Office.

It is agreed, by most authorities, that U. S. Assayer Humbert did not initially expect to make coins as such, but simply to place the federal stamp upon ingots of various denomination to be issued by the Assay Office. A die (and/or dies) was prepared by Humbert for this

purpose prior to his departure for the west coast. The actual die work was supposedly executed by C. C. Wright of New York City, and bore the familiar "-- D -- C" obverse, which would permit its use on any size ingot or bar, the fineness and value in dollars and cents to be finally stamped in by hand. From what can be established, the original intent of Assayer Humbert was to manufacture and issue "coin ingots" in the denominations of 50, 100 and 200 dollars, all three denominations to be octagonal in shape, the variance being only in the thickness of the pieces. The octagonal shape was presumably conceived as a ~~handly~~ HANDY solution for a fixed size ingot, which would best accommodate the round die to be used, and yet would not closely resemble regular round coinage. A few weeks after the opening of the United States Assay Office, two prominent San Francisco newspapers, the San Francisco Prices Current and the Daily Alta California, both described the 100 and 200 dollar denomination pieces as bearing the same stamp and being of the same size as the 50 dollar issues, differing only in proportionate thickness. The same papers also stated that rectangular ingots of 500 and 1000 DOLLAR denomination were contemplated, the San Francisco Prices Current describing them as follows: "Those of five hundred and one thousand dollars are in form parallelograms, about five inches in length and one and three-quarter inches in breadth, and ranging in thickness- the smaller being about three-tenths of an inch and the larger six-tenths." No specimen of any denomination ABOVE 50 DOLLARS, issued by the United States Assay Office, has been seen by the editor to date, although a 100 dollar "coin ingot," double the thickness of the conventional slug, and bearing the "100" stamp upon its face, is reliably reported to exist in a New England collection. The belief that ingots of higher denomination than 100 dollars should exist, has been strengthened by the recent discovery of a 200 dollar ingot OR BAR of the United States Assay Office of Gold, dated 1853, which see.

The status of the United States Assay Office issues was a matter of considerable importance to Californians. In the absence of any other form of U. S. coin, they were badly in need of a medium which could be received at the Custom House, where both dust and private gold coins were refused in payment of import tariffs. According to the San Francisco Prices Current, Feb. 14, 1851, "By order of the Secretary of the Treasury these (ASSAY OFFICE) ingots and coin are to be received for duties and other dues to the United States Government," which is sufficient evidence of their acceptance as, for all intents and purposes, United States coins.

In addition, the Daily Alta California, for Jan. 30, 1851, quoted T. Butler King, Collector of Customs of the Port of San Francisco, as saying "I am authorized to receive those bars and ingots at the Custom House." This same article (cited on p. 21 of ~~Adam's~~ Adams's Private Gold Coinage of California, Part II) referred to the Assay Office issues by Humbert as "coins of the United States Government.....issued by Act of Congress, and bearing the stamp of the Government." Nevertheless, they were not in 1851 accepted as legal tender by all Government officials owing to a somewhat ambiguous wording of the authorizing act. However, during the latter part of the year, the 50 dollar ~~ingots~~ "COIN INGOTS" became virtually the sole circulating medium in California, as the private issues had been mainly discredited because ~~most~~ SO MANY of them were worth less than face value.

The withdrawal of the private issues, which were of the convenient denominations of $5, $10 and $20, soon brought about a serious situation. Regular United States coins were hoarded for the payment of customs duties in small and ~~uneven~~ ODD amounts, and people found that the fifty dollar pieces, being ABOUT the only gold coins in circulation, were inconvenient because of their size and denomination. As early as April 14, 1851, Moffat & Co. petitioned Secretary of the Treasury Thomas Corwin, for authority to issue pieces of smaller denomination than fifty dollars. Permission from the Treasury Department was not forthcoming, as evidenced by refusals to Moffat & Co. from Washington, dated July 9th and August 26, 1851. By December of that year, the fifty dollar slugs were so unpopular and coins of lesser denomination so scarce, that one had to accept a 4% discount in order to change the unwieldy octagonal pieces. However, on December 9, 1851, the Treasury Department granted permission for the United States Assay Office to issue coins below the fifty dollar denomination, and dies for both $10 and $20 coins were hastily prepared. Unfortunately, almost immediately after granting permission to issue the much needed lower denominations, the Treasury Department rescinded their authority to do so, as a bill was introduced into Congress concerning a Mint and Assay Office in San Francisco. Accordingly, in January, 1852, the firm of Moffat & Co. reluctantly issued some $300,000. in Tens, while Humbert as U. S. Assayer continued to issue the fifty dollar slugs in smaller quantity.

These 30,000 "Eagles" were issued by Moffat & Co. bearing their own name upon the obverse, and the facsimile upon the reverse, of the same eagle appearing upon the quasi-

official fifty dollar gold "coin ingots" bearing the federal stamp. This "emergency" $10 gold piece of Moffat & Co. appeared about the middle of January, 1852. At about the same time, the comparatively new but respected firm of Wass, Molitor & Co. issued $5 and $10 pieces, likewise in response to the strong demand for something to supplement the Assay Office issues.

Eventual permission to strike coins of $10 and $20 denomination was received at the U. S. Assay Office early in February, 1852. Several weeks earlier, a few days before Christmas, 1851, Moffat & Co. as such, with Augustus Humbert as U. S. Assayer, reorganized. John L. Moffat retired and Joseph R. Curtis, Philo H. Perry, and Samuel H. Ward took over the business, however, retaining the RIGHT TO USE THE name "Moffat & Co." As soon as authority was granted by the Treasury Department to issue "ingots" (i.e. coins) in the $10 and $20 denominations, they did so, altering the dies originally prepared late in 1851 and bearing that date. The 1851 was changed to 1852, and the "Eagles" and "Double Eagles" quickly ~~manufactured.~~ PUT INTO CIRCULATION.

The ten dollar pieces were presumably first issued on Feb. 12, 1852, as a notice in the Daily Alta California, for that date, partly read as follows:

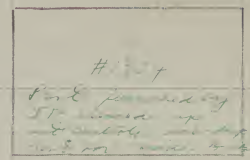
> A CARD. - Moffat & Co. take great pleasure in announcing to the public that they have received by the mail of yesterday instructions from the Treasury Department authorizing the issue from the United States Assay Office of ingots (sic) of the denomination of ten and twenty dollars, and that they are prepared to issue the same this day.

According to E. H. Adams, the twenty dollar pieces first appeared on Feb. 28, 1852; (see p. 35, Private Gold Coinage of California, Part II).

Although a limited number of ~~twenty dollar~~ $20 coins, and a much larger number of ~~ten dollar~~ $10 coins, dated 1852, of the old style ("Augustus Humbert, United States Assayer of Gold, California"), were issued under the technical proprietorship of Curtis, Perry & Ward, we have included them under the United States Assay Office listing for ~~obvious reasons.~~ REASONS OF SIMPLIFICATION.

Photos + sketches on special cards attached.

THIS IS THE ONLY COMPLETE ILLUSTRATION



SHOWING ALL SIX SIDES, EVER PUBLISHED OF A SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE INGOT.

1850. $41.68 INGOT. 21 3/8 CARAT. 46 DWT. .... UNIQUE (6 OR 46 (DWT.) PUNCHED OVER NUMERAL 1, INVERTED. CARETUL EXAMINATION OF THIS INGOT INDICATES THAT ALL STAMPS ARE FROM LOGOTYPES EXCEPT FOR THE FRACTION "3/8" THE WEIGHT "46" AND THE DENOMINATION, $41.68. THE FINENESS NUMBER "21" MAY BE FROM A LOGOTYPE, BUT IS, MOST PROBABLY, FROM INDIVIDUAL PUNCHES.)

THE STACK SPECIMEN. DISCOVERED IN THE SAN FRANCISCO - BAY AREA IN AUGUST, 1964. THIS PIECE WAS ALLEGEDLY GIVEN BY KOHLER TO A CAPTAIN AND OWNER OF A (SACRAMENTO?) RIVER STEAMER, AND WAS RETAINED BY HIS FAMILY AS A PERSONAL MEMENTO. SHORTLY AFTER ITS APPEARANCE, DEALER BEN STACK PURCHASED THIS INGOT FROM THE ORIGINAL OWNER'S GREAT, GREAT GRANDCHILD, A WOMAN APPROACHING MIDDLE AGE.

STATE ASSAYER

F. O. KOHLER

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$41.65

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Article

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF STATE ASSAYER, MELTER AND REFINER OF GOLD

San Francisco; branch office, Sacramento City

(Under Act of the State Legislature, April 20, 1850)

FREDERICK D. KOHLER, STATE ASSAYER

Although California was not formally admitted to the Union, as the thirty-first state, until September 9, 1850, a state government was created after the adoption of the first State Constitution in November, 1849. A Governor was elected and inducted into office, a Legislature was formed and commenced to enact laws, and senators and congressmen were selected to serve in Washington, as soon as California was admitted to statehood. Not only did California organize a state government prior to being accepted into the Union, but she was the only territory or state, at any time, to set up a provisional mint under state authority, for the issue and circulation of what amounted to money. This mint was called the State Assay Office. It's product was refined ingots or bars, popular association of the stamped with the state name, and payable to the state for all "State and county dues, taxes, and assessments, at the value expressed thereon in dollars and cents." That this establishment was the only one of its kind ever operated in the United States, under the authority of a state, is not as surprising as is the assumption that the State of California, through the medium of its ingot mintage, presumably violated that clause of the United States Constitution restricting the minting of money to the central government. This fact alone, places the ingots issued by F. D. Kohler, as State Assayer, in a class by themselves. That these pieces are in reality a state coinage, manufactured and circulated under state law, after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, gives them a unique place in the American numismatic field. Their singular importance has long been denied them, by the inclusion of the "Kohler bars" with the issues of the private California coiners, whose issues were made without any kind of authority and generally in clear violation of either state or federal law, or both.

The Assay Office was needed for two very strong reasons. The first of these was the indefinite value of gold-dust, a situation in which dealers and brokers prospered and miners and laborers lost. Gold-dust had an average intrinsic value of $18 to the ounce, but was passing current at only $16 to the ounce. In some areas, the miners were paid as little as $6 and $8 an ounce for dust, and the Indians even less. In all instances, the hustlers in the gold-

dust business, the "operators" of the period, made a minimum of $2 an ounce on dust, often more, and considerably more on "quicksilver gold." The second reason why a reputable, state sanctioned and operated Assay Office was needed, was because of the confusion attending the circulation of privately made gold coins. These coins made their appearance in the Spring of 1849. Within a year, many of them fell into disrepute as they were worth considerably less than their stamped or marked value. Some of the private mints made their coins and ingots of full value, but there were not enough of these to fill the need. In addition, new people were entering California continuously, and many of these immigrants were victimized by the fraudulent coin before they knew any better. On top of the "rigged" gold-dust market and undervalued coin, the picture was further confused by the general use of false scales and/or weights, and the circulation of adulterated gold-dust and spurious nuggets. As Edgar H. Adams so well put it, "A tremendous trade was carried on in different parts of California, and a stable circulating medium of definite value was urgently required, which led again and again to agitation for the establishment of a United States Branch Mint or an Assay Office."

The creation of a State Assay Office had been suggested as early as July 22, 1848, six months after gold had been discovered at Coloma. A group of citizens addressed a resolution to the Military Governor, Col. Richard B. Mason, to appoint a supervised assayer to manufacture stamped ingots. The suggestion did not appeal to Gov. Mason, probably because it was early in the game and the headaches weren't advanced enough, or more probably, because Mason did not want to go beyond his vested authority.

In early April, 1850, a meeting of San Francisco business men was held concerning the twin problems of using "quicksilver gold" as currency and the ~~use~~ circulation of private coin of erratic value. A committee appointed at the meeting reported on April 5th, that (1) the use of "quicksilver gold" as currency was out, because it could be easily adulterated, and (2) that the privately made coin be refused for obvious reasons. The positive concensus of opinion was that proposals be received for assaying, and that qualified applicants be recommended to the Legislature for the establishment of what would amount to a State Assay Office. On April 6, 1850, about four hundred of the leading citizens addressed a petition to the State Legislature, asking that the office of State Assayer be created, whose duty it would be to smelt and assay gold-dust and issue ingots bearing upon them a state stamp, with the number of carats, weight and mint value thereof included, to be used as a substitute for the present forms of gold

currency. On April ~~12,~~ 9TH, 1850, a number of prominent gentlemen petitioned Governor Peter Burnett, asking that Frederick D. Kohler be appointed State Assayer. Kohler was in the assaying business for himself, and had formerly been associated with politican David C. Broderick in the Jewelry business, with the profitable operation of the Pacific Company (which see) as a quiet side line.

The bill creating the office of State Assayer became a law on April 20, 1850. E. H. Adams, in his Private Gold Coinage of California, Part I, quotes the full text of the law on pps. 6 to 9. It is interesting to note that Section 4 limits the weight of gold-dust or bullion received by the State Assayer to "not less than two ounces," and that Section 7 provided for the manufacture of ingots with the same weight limitations. Section 10 permitted the State Assayer and the Director of the Assay Office to charge depositors 1% each of the value stamped upon the ingots or bars issued, out of which would come their expenses and profit. An additional 3/4 of 1% was to be charged for the use of the State Treasury. Section 13 gave the stamped ingots of the Assay Office legal tender status within the state, and Sections 17 and 18 specified the penalties for tampering with, mutilating or counterfeiting them. Upon passage of the Act creating the State Assay Office, Governor Burnett appointed O. P. Sutton as Director and F. D. Kohler as State Assayer. Ex New Yorker Kohler at once abandoned his private assaying business in Clay Street, San Francisco, which was sold to Baldwin & Co. An announcement in THE Daily Alta California, May 24, 1850, indicated that the Assay Office was to open on Monday, June 13th, at Kohler's old address, on the south side of Portsmouth Square, in the building already occupied by George C. Baldwin and Thomas S. Holman.

The California State Assay Office was an immediate success, about 5,000 ounces of gold being deposited the opening day. Successive days showed even more activity. One of the larger individual deposits originally weighed 689½ dwts., which after smelting was reduced to 682½ dwts. This large deposit was processed into a bar with a fineness of 20·3/4 carats, valued at $570.54. From this, and the lowest denomination Kohler ingot presently known, plus other data, we conclude that the State Assay Office issues of record ranged in stamped amount from $36.55 to $570.54, with the average bar valued from $40 to $150. It can be surmised that numerous ingots of even amount, mainly of $50 denomination, were issued, obviously because such denominations would have had considerable popular appeal. The Philadelphia Mint Assayers, Jacob R. Eckfeldt and William E. DuBois, in the third edition of their New Varieties of Gold and

Silver Coins, Counterfeit Coins, and Bullion; with Mint Values, New York, 1852, were of the opinion that Assayer Kohler made minor errors in computing the value of the ingots he manufactured, but that these were always in favor of the depositor. "We find a slight undervaluing in his basis of calculation, and generally an error of assay in the same direction; so that on the average his bars are worth at the mint one per cent., perhaps one and a half, more than the value stamped upon them." This variance alone would account for the extreme rarity of the Assay Office ingots today, their higher actual value having driven the great majority of them, particularly of high denomination, to the melting pot. The two Mint Assayers at Philadelphia thought that the State Assay Office ingots were initially cast, then finished with the use of a hammer. This belief was supported by other contemporary accounts. The issues of the Kohler operated establishment were not enormously popular in all quarters, as bankers and gold-dust dealers did not like to see their prime source of easy money so neatly compromised. However, the newspapers of the day, supported by the responsible business community, endorsed the efforts of the Assay Office, and it continuously prospered during its seven and one-half months of operation.

Section 15 of the April 20th law permitted the establishment of branch offices of the Office of State Assayer. Accordingly, a branch office was set up at Sacramento, which opened for business on July 1, 1850. This branch office was located on Third Street, near the corner of "J" Street, Sacramento City. John Bigler, later a Governor of California, was appointed Director, and Milton S. Latham, afterward a U. S. Senator, was Bigler's first assistant. The law specified that bars and ingots issued at the branch office(s), in addition to the regular inscriptions, should bear the name of the city in which the branch was situated. Both of the known Sacramento ingots are so inscribed. The Sacramento office evidently did a flourishing business also, an article in the Sacramento Daily Transcript, August 8, 1850, stating "that the number of depositors at the Sacramento Assay Office (up to that time) total 161. ...The value of the gold, at $16 per ounce, was $59,028.80; at $14, $51,650.84, and the actual value at the United States Mint, $66,596.84."

The Act creating the California State Assay Office was repealed on January 28, 1851, in anticipation of the opening of the United States Assay Office, as a federal provisional mint, a few days later.

State Assayer Kohler allegedly went back into the private assaying business after leaving

state employ, but we have always been confused by a notice in the Daily Alta California of July 28, 1853, which connected Kohler with the United States Assay Office of Gold. This business card read as follows:

> UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE. - Frederick D. Kohler, United States Assayer. Office at Wass, Molitor & Co., Merchant Street, San Francisco.

Perhaps Kohler had an interim appointment in the absence of Augustus Humbert, while the U. S. Assay Office of Gold was shut down tmmporarily, and the establishment of Wass, Molitor & Co. was pressed into service. It must be remembered that during this time the 1853 twenty dollar gold pieces of Moffat & Co. made their appearance, manufacture of the United States Assay Office of Gold double eagles having ceased on July 22, 1853. Much information is still ~~lacking~~ MISSING concerning the latter activities of the only California State Assayer, just as much is yet to be unearthed concerning the detailed history of the State Assay Office, not to mention the hidden Kohler ingots as yet undiscovered.

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSAY OFFICE

REVERSE

BLANK.

1850. $50.00 INGOT. 20 15/16 CARAT. 56 1/5 DWT.... UNIQUE

THIS SIGN PROBLEM DENOMINATION WAS PROBABLY STRUCK IN QUANITY, BUT ONLY ONE EXAMPLE IS NOW KNOWN. THE WALDO NEWCOMER SPECIMEN. DISCOVERED IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS, ON DISPLAY IN THE SAN FRANCISCO MINT, BY FARRAN ZERBE IN 1905. THIS INGOT WAS ORIGINALLY IN THE COLLECTION OF DR. SPIERS, WHO GAVE IT TO THE SOCIETY ABOUT THIRTY YEARS EARLIER. THE SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS SOLD THEIR COLLECTION OF "PIONEER" ITEMS IN 1916 TO COLLECTORS HUDDART AND FRIEDLANDER, WHO IN TURN SOLD THIS PIECE AND A MASSACHUSETTS CALIFORNIA CO. FIVE DOLLARS TO E. H. ADAMS, AGENT FOR WALDO NEWCOMER OF BALTIMORE, FOR $10,000. AT THE BREAK-UP OF THE NEWCOMER COLLECTION, 1933-35, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THIS DENOMINATION WAS SOLD TO J. W. GARRETT, ALSO OF BALTIMORE, BY B. M. MEHL. MONROE COLL., NO. 2663

REVERSE

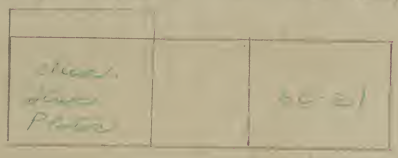
BLANK.

1850. $54.09 INGOT. 21 CARAT. 60 3/4 DWT..... UNIQUE

THIS INGOT IS ONLY KNOWN FROM AN ILLUSTRATION IN A BOOK BY ALBERT D. RICHARDSON, PUBLISHED IN 1867, AND REPRINTED IN 1875. SEE: BEYOND THE MISSISSIPPI. FROM THE GREAT RIVER TO THE GREAT OCEAN. LIFE AND ADVENTURE ON THE PRAIRIES, MOUNTAINS, AND PACIFIC COAST. HOW MEN AND NATURE LOOK AND WORK. PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED. PORTRAITS AND DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES OF THE EXPLORERS, PIONEERS, MINERS, MORMONS, INDIANS, MISSIONARIES, ROBBERS, AND CHIEF NATURAL WONDERS OF THE WEST. STORIES AND RECORDS. 1857-1867. HARTFORD, CONN.: AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO. (CTS.)

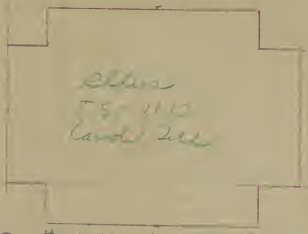
BRANCH OFFICE AT SACRAMENTO CITY

JULY 1, 1850 - JANUARY 28, 1851

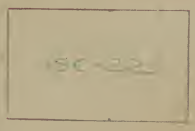


1850. $36.55 INGOT. 20 CARAT. 42 DWT., 12 GRS. UNIQUE

THE VIRGIL M. BRAND SPECIMEN. PURCHASED IN 1908 BY MR. BRAND FROM A FAMILY WHO HAD OWNED IT SINCE THE TIME OF ISSUE. AT THE DIVISION OF THE BRAND ESTATE, THIS PIECE WENT INTO THE ARMAND BRAND SECTION, FROM WHERE IT WAS SOLD, IN 1945, FOR $5,000 (OR $10,000 - AMOUNT SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION) TO AGENTS OF KING FAROUK. AT THE SALE OF THE FAROUK COLLECTION OF EGYPT, IN 1954, THIS INGOT WAS LOT 346, AND WAS ILLUSTRATED ON PLATE VI. IT WAS SOLD FOR $1,300 TO A CALIFORNIA DEALER, AND RESOLD BY HIM TO A NEW YORK FIRM FOR $7,500 AT THE 1954 A.N.A. CONVENTION, FOR THE ACCOUNT OF AN ANONYMOUS COLLECTOR.



THIS IS THE ONLY COMPLETE ILLUSTRATION



SHOWING ALL SIX STAMPED SIDES, EVER PUBLISHED OF A SACRAMENTO OFFICE INGOT.

1850. $47.71 INGOT. 21 CARAT. 51 DWT., 2 GRS. ... UNIQUE

THE PAUL FRANKLIN SPECIMEN. DISCOVERED IN ARIZONA, IN MID 1956, BY MR. FRANKLIN. AUTHENTICATED THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE EDITOR AND F. C. C. BOYD. ORIGINALLY THE PROPERTY OF A LOCAL INHABITANT NAMED TOM MOHER, THIS ITEM WAS OFFERED FOR SALE TO A DEALER* YEARS AGO. THE DEALER HELD THE PIECE ON MEMO, AND, FINALLY RETURNING IT, MADE A LOW, UNACCEPTABLE OFFER, CLAIMING THE INGOT WAS FRAUDULENT.

* B. MAX MEHL

Red = 6 PT.

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSAY OFFICE

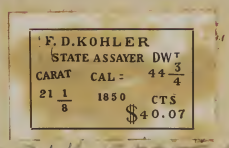
OFFICE OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSAYER

MAIN OFFICE AT SAN FRANCISCO

JUNE 13, 1850 – JANUARY 28, 1851

1850. $37.31 INGOT. 22 CARAT. 40 DWT. _____ UNIQUE
THE F. C. C. BOYD SPECIMEN. OBTAINED FROM A CONNECTICUT FAMILY, CIRCA 1936-37, BY HOWLAND WOOD, THIS PIECE WAS PURCHASED BY WAYTE RAYMOND, LATER PASSING INTO THE BOYD COLLECTION. IT WAS PURCHASED BY AGENTS OF KING FAROUK OF EGYPT FROM MR. BOYD IN 1945 FOR CLOSE TO $8,000, AND WAS SOLD BY THEM TO THE KING FOR $13,750. WHEN THE FAROUK COLLECTION WAS SOLD AT AUCTION FROM FEB. 24 TO MARCH 6, 1954, AS THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF EGYPT IN CAIRO, THIS INGOT WAS LOT 343, AND SOLD FOR £1,300 TO A CALIFORNIA DEALER. IT WAS THEN RESOLD BY HIM TO A PROMINENT NEW YORK FIRM FOR $7,500 AT THE A.N.A. CONVENTION IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, AUGUST, 1954, FOR THE ACCOUNT OF AN ANONYMOUS COLLECTOR.

REVERSE



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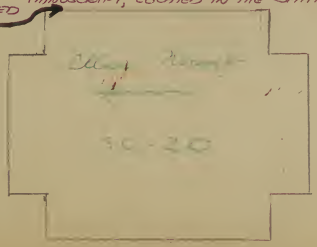
1850. $40.07 INGOT. 21 1/8 CARAT. 44 3/4 DWT. _____ UNIQUE
THE PHILADELPHIA MINT CABINET SPECIMEN. STOLEN FROM THAT INSTITUTION ON AUGUST 16, 1858, AND NEVER RECOVERED. REFERENCE: [illegible] 1858-1907 (UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT, LOCATED IN THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

INSERT $41.68 SF "STACK" INGOT.



REVERSE
BLANK
(AS ABOVE)

1850. $45.34 INGOT. 21 1/2 CARAT. 49 3/4 DWT. _____ UNIQUE
THE BRUCE CARTWRIGHT SPECIMEN. SOLD AT THE 1907 LONDON SALE OF THE CARTWRIGHT COLLECTION OF HONOLULU, AND PURCHASED BY VIRGIL BRAND OF CHICAGO FOR $1,650. FOLLOWING MR BRAND'S DEATH IN 1926, THIS INGOT WENT INTO THE ARMAND BRAND SECTION OF THE ESTATE. IT WAS SOLD FROM THERE IN 1943, FOR $5,000 TO AGENTS OF KING FAROUK. AT THE SALE OF THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF EGYPT IN 1954, THIS PIECE WAS LOT 344, AND SOLD FOR £1,400. THE INGOT WAS PERSONALLY PURCHASED IN CAIRO BY A DISTINGUISHED MID-WESTERN COLLECTOR, IN WHOSE COLLECTION IT STILL REMAINS.

LIKE ALMOST ALL WESTERN AMERICAN INGOTS MANUFACTURED FROM RAW METAL UPON REPAIR OF A DEPOSITOR, OR AS THE RESULT OF AN ASSAY, KOHLER BARS ARE INDIVIDUALLY UNIQUE, IN THAT NO TWO SPECIMENS WOULD BE IDENTICAL. THE ONLY POSSIBLE EXCEPTION TO THIS STATEMENT MIGHT BE THE $50 DENOMINATION, WHICH SEE.

Red = 6 PT.

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE

Illustrated lot 266
Morgenthau sale 10/18/33
SC-1 Pl. II
Pl. IV

1851. 50 DOLLARS. 925 THOUS. WITHOUT 50 ON REVERSE.
DWT. GRS. AT BOTTOM OF REVERSE
EDGE: AUGUSTUS HUMBERT ASSAYER OF GOLD CALIFORNIA.
UNITED STATES 1851. ---------- UNIQUE

THIS PIECE APPEARED AS LOT 266 IN THE J. C. MORGENTHAU & CO. SALE OF OCTOBER 18, 1933; IT WAS THERE ILLUSTRATED ON PLATE V. WAYTE RAYMOND DESCRIBED THE LOT AS "TYPE OF ADAMS NO. 80 (BRONZE PATTERN, EX BUSHNELL COLL., 1882) EXCEPT THAT THE NAME WRIGHT FEC. DOES NOT APPEAR ON EDGE. THE FINENESS IS EXPRESSED AS 925 EVIDENTLY THE DIE MAKERS GUESS AS TO THE VALUE (I.E. QUALITY) OF CALIFORNIA GOLD. STRUCK IN GOLD CONSIDERABLY ALLOYED WITH SOME LIGHT METAL (PRESUMABLY SILVER). SHOWS SIGNS OF CIRCULATION. FROM AN OLD CALIFORNIA FAMILY, ORIGINATING FROM NEW YORK." RAYMOND FURTHER DESCRIBED THIS COIN INGOT AS A TRIAL PIECE IN GOLD BY C.C. WRIGHT. WE DISAGREE WITH THIS CONCLUSION, AND BELIEVE THAT THIS ITEM REPRESENTS THE FIRST TYPE OF ISSUE OF THE UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE, UTILIZING AN OBVERSE DIE WHERE THE EXACT WEIGHT COULD BE STAMPED IN AS WELL AS THE FINENESS AND DENOMINATION. LOT 266 REALIZED $535 IN 1933; IT'S PRESENT WHEREABOUTS IS UNKNOWN.

1851. 50 DOLLARS. 880 THOUS. WITH 50 ON REVERSE. FINE VERY FINE
EDGE: AUGUSTUS HUMBERT UNITED STATES ASSAYER OF GOLD CALIFORNIA 1851. ---------- $2,250.00 $2,[illegible]
WEIGHT 1310 TO 1320 GRAINS, AS ON ALL THAT FOLLOW, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE WEIGHT OF SPECIFIC PIECES, WHICH ARE GIVEN WHERE AVAILABLE.

1851. 50 DOLLARS. 880 THOUS. WITHOUT 50 ON REVERSE.
EDGE: AS PRECEDING. ---------- 1,750.00 2,[illegible]
WEIGHT, 1316.50 GRAINS.

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

		Fine-VF	VF Ex. Fine
1851	50 Dollars. 880 Thous. Rev. Medium Target Center. Edge: Reeded. ------------------	$1,350.00	$2,300 [illegible]
	Weight, 1318.25 grains.		

1851	50 Dollars. 887 Thous. Rev. Large Target Center. Edge: Reeded. ------------------	1,250.00	2,100 [illegible]

Illustration specimen — J. H. Merrill, [illegible] ANS Reg. 57-0826 — SC-3

WR Photo — SC-4

1851	50 Dollars. 887 Thous. Rev. Small Target Center. A "Mule"; the "Reverse of 1852." Edge: Reeded. ------------------	1,500.00	2,750 [illegible]

Weights. 1307.75, 1309.40 grains.

All specimens seen are from a worn and rusty obverse die. They were undoubtedly struck very late in 1851. The variety was not listed by E. H. Adams. This "Transitional Muling" was first given publicity by Jim Kelly, Dayton, Ohio, in his 1957 Central States Convention auction catalogue.

THIS PAGE [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] (... [illegible] AT TOP OF PAGE) →

1851 50 Dollars, similar to last. Counterstamped: in a circular die stamp, J. T. Jones,/ San/ Franc?/ Corner Mont? & Commercial St.

The close proximity of the Jones address to that of the U. S. Assay Office is quite interesting. A number of years ago, Wayte Raymond handled a specimen of this counterstamp (rev. illustrated), which was sold in one of the J. C. Morgenthau & Co. sales. Its present whereabouts is unknown. However, we do not doubt that additional examples are extant.

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES SAN FRANCISCO

Illustration, lot 701
N.N. sale, April 19, 1956

SC-2 Plate II [illegible]

1851. 50 DOLLARS. 880 THOUS. "RADIANT STAR" REVERSE.
EDGE: AS PRECEDING. .... UNIQUE

THIS VARIETY FIRST APPEARED IN THE R. F. PELTZER COLLECTION, SOLD BY GLENDINING & CO., LTD., JUNE 20-24, 1927. IT WAS LISTED AS LOT 50, ILLUSTRATED ON PLATE I, AND PURCHASED BY SPINK & SON, LTD. (THE CATALOGUERS), FOR APPROXIMATELY $625. THE COIN WAS DESCRIBED BY SPINKS AS A "BRILLIANT PROOF," WHICH IT WASN'T, THE PIECE HAVING BEEN CLEVERLY TOUCHED UP OR RETOOLED SO AS TO REMOVE MINOR SIGNS OF HANDLING. IT LATER APPEARED IN THE T. JAMES CLARKE COLL., AND WAS SOLD BY NEW NETHERLANDS COIN CO., INC., APRIL 19, 1956. IN THAT SALE THE PIECE WAS DESCRIBED AS LOT 701; IT WAS ILLUSTRATED ON PLATE II.

	FINE	VERY FINE
1851. 50 DOLLARS. 887 THOUS. WITH 50 ON REVERSE. EDGE: AS PRECEDING	$2,100.00	$[illegible]

WEIGHT, 1302.75 GRAINS.

THE FIRST ILLUSTRATION OF A COIN INGOT PUBLISHED, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, WAS A WOOD CUT ILLUSTRATION OF THIS VARIETY, WHICH APPEARED IN [illegible], A SUPPLEMENT TO THE BANK [illegible] COMPILED BY J. THOMPSON, NEW YORK, 1851. THE PIECE WAS DESCRIBED AS A "QUINTUPLE EAGLE," AND LISTED UNDER "GOLD COINS OF THE UNITED STATES," AND NOT UNDER THE SEPARATE DESIGNATION GIVEN, "CALIFORNIA AND BECHTLER PIECES."

1851. 50 DOLLARS. 887 THOUS. WITHOUT 50 ON REVERSE. EDGE: AS PRECEDING	2000.00	[illegible]

IT IS BELIEVED THAT ALL OF THE LETTERED EDGE TYPE COIN INGOTS WERE FROM OBVERSE DIES BY C.C. WRIGHT, REVERSE DIES BY AUGUSTUS HUMBERT.

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

Reproduction [illegible]
T. H. Mitchell Collection, (SC [illegible])
Auction [illegible] 89-09-4
on [illegible]

	Fine - V.F.	VF - Ex. Fine
1852/1. 10 DOLLARS. EDGE: REEDED.	$350.00	$600.00

WEIGHTS, 259.75, 260.50, 261, 261.75 GRAINS. (OFFICIAL WGT.: 262.70 GRAINS)
THIS VARIETY IS ALWAYS FOUND WITH A DIAGONALLY CRACKED REVERSE DIE. IT WAS STRUCK FOR ONLY A LIMITED TIME, PROBABLY FEB. 12-14, 1852. E. H. ADAMS DID NOT RECOGNIZE NOR LIST THIS OVERDATE. THE FIRST TIME IT WAS CORRECTLY DESCRIBED, AND ILLUSTRATED, WAS IN THE FIFTIETH SALE CATALOGUE OF THE NEW NETHERLANDS COIN CO., INC., DEC. 6, 7, 1957, LOT 877; PLATE I.

1852. 10 DOLLARS. EDGE: REEDED.	250.00	450.00

WEIGHTS, 259.75, 260, 261.25, 261.50, 262.40 GRAINS.
IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE DIES FOR THE TWO LOWER DENOMINATIONS WERE MANUFACTURED AT THE UNITED STATES MINT IN PHILADELPHIA.

1852/1. 20 DOLLARS. EDGE: REEDED. (EST. 7500)	1,750.00	2,500.00

WEIGHTS, 520, 524 GRAINS. (OFFICIAL WGT.: 525.40 GRAINS)
IN OUR INTRODUCTION WE STATED THAT, ACCORDING TO E. H. ADAMS, THE FIRST TWENTY DOLLAR PIECES OF THE ASSAY OFFICE WERE RELEASED ON FEB. 28, 1852. THIS INFORMATION WAS PREDICATED UPON AN ARTICLE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO PRICES CURRENT FOR THAT DATE, WHICH READ, "THE UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE COMMENCED THIS MORNING ISSUING THE TWENTY-DOLLAR PIECES." RESEARCH IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES CONTRADICTS THIS NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT. ACCORDING TO THE MONTHLY SAN FRANCISCO REPORTS, COINAGE OF THE TWENTY DOLLAR PIECES WAS FROM MARCH 6, 1852 TO APRIL 2, 1852. WE CANNOT EXPLAIN THE DISCREPANCY.

THIS PAGE CAN GROW MORE IF NECESSARY (REMEMBER DENOMINATION MONOGRAMS AND $ SIGN AT TOP OF PAGE)

1852. 50 DOLLARS. 887 THOUS. REV. SMALL TARGET CENTER. EDGE: REEDED. (3,390)	1,850.00	3,000.00

WEIGHT, 1306.75 GRAINS.
THE OBVERSE AND REVERSE DIES FOR THE REEDED EDGE TYPE COIN INGOTS, WITH FIFTY DOLLS. UPON OBVERSE, WERE CUT BY ALBERT KÜNER.

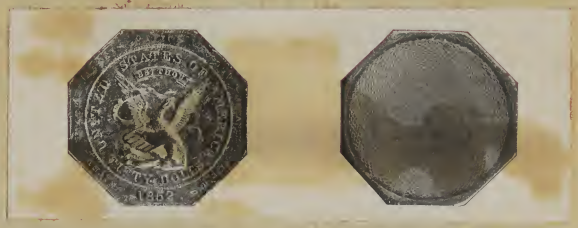
Green = [illegible]
Red = 6 PT.

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE OF GOLD

	Fine - V.F.	V.F. - Ex. Fine
1852. 10 Dollars. 884 Thous. Edge: Reeded.....	$237.50	$425.00

Weights, 258.25, 259, 260, 260.25, 261.25, 261.75, 262.50 grains.



1852 50 Dollars. 887 Thous. Edge: Reeded... 1200.00 2000.00
Weights, 1307.75, 1308.75 grains.
Die varieties exist. Struck between February and October, 1852.

1852. 50 Dollars. 900 Thous. Edge: Reeded (est. 23,800)...1400.00 2250.00
Struck from the late autumn of 1852 until Feb. 21, 1853.
It is believed that the dies for both this and the last were also cut by Albert Küner.

1853 10 Dollars. 884 Thous. Edge: Reeded:..800.00 1150.00
Weight, 262.25 grains.

USA09-2

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

FINE - V. F. V. F. - EX. FINE

1853. 10 DOLLARS. 900 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED.....$700.00 $1000.00

A TOTAL OF ONLY 20,874 1853 TEN DOLLAR PIECES WERE STRUCK FROM JANUARY TO JUNE OF THAT YEAR. THE DIVISION OF THIS MINTAGE INTO THE TWO TYPES IS NOT PRESENTLY KNOWN.

1853. 20 DOLLARS. 884 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED.....1350.00 2000.00

WEIGHTS, 523.75, 524.75 GRAINS.

ALL SPECIMENS SEEN SHOW 884 CLEARLY PUNCHED OVER 880 (THOUS.).

1853. 20 DOLLARS. 900 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED.....325.00 450.00

WEIGHTS, 513.25, 513.50, 514, 515, 516, 516.75 GRAINS.

MANY DIE VARIETIES EXIST. MILLIONS OF THESE 900/1000 TWENTY DOLLAR PIECES WERE STRUCK FROM FEB. 23, 1853 TO JULY 22, 1853. WHILE TRIAL PIECES ARE KNOWN FROM A SIMILAR REVERSE DIE DATED 1852, CONTRARY TO REPORTS NO 1853 REVERSE CUT OVER 1852 HAS BEEN SEEN.

1853. 20 DOLLARS. 900 OVER 884 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED. _____

PRESENTLY KNOWN ONLY AS A SILVER TRIAL PIECE (293 GRAINS) IN THE COLLECTION OF THE EDITOR. THE UNDERTYPE IS VERY CLEAR. IT IS BELIEVED THAT SPECIMENS IN GOLD EXIST.

THIS PAGE CAN BRING MORE IN NUMISMATICS

Illustrations courtesy
J. H. Mauldin Coll.
ANS Neg. 99-6829
SC-6

BRILLIANT PROOF

1853. 20 DOLLARS. 900 THOUS. EDGE REEDED. SPECIMEN COINAGE (9) 4000.00

WEIGHTS, 514.50, 515, 516, 516.25 (2), 516.75, 518.25 GRAINS.

THE GIVEN FIGURES REPRESENT THE WEIGHTS OF SEVEN PERFECT PROOFS UNEARTHED IN 1958. TWO IMPAIRED PROOFS, FROM THE SAME SOURCE, HAVE NOT BEEN WEIGHED NOR CAREFULLY EXAMINED. THE SEVEN PERFECT PIECES ARE ALL FROM IDENTICAL OBV. AND REV. DIES. THEY VARY IN THEIR OFFERING CONTENT OR PERCENTAGES OF SILVER AND COPPER ALLOY ADDED TO THE 900 PARTS GOLD. (U.S. MINT STANDARD: .900 GOLD, .050 SILVER, .050 COPPER, TO .900 GOLD, .033 SILVER, .067 COPPER.) IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT ALL OF THE TEN AND TWENTY DOLLAR DIES ORIGINATED AT THE U.S. MINT IN PHILADELPHIA, BUT THAT THE FINENESS (IN SOME INSTANCES) WAS ALTERED ON THE OBVERSE DIES IN SAN FRANCISCO.

USA05-3

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

Silver, laid down
#3 2/14-2/23/58 Cup

SC-7

1853. 20 DOLLARS. TARGET OBVERSE TYPE.
OBV. A. HUMBERT ABOVE TABLET: U.S. ASSAYER BELOW.
900 (PUNCHED IN) THOUS AT UPPER RIGHT; DOLS. / GOLD / 20 (PUNCHED IN) AT LOWER LEFT. PERIOD AFTER THOUS. DIRECTLY OPPOSITE R OF ASSAYER; PERIOD AFTER U. OF U. S. DIRECTLY ABOVE L OF DOLS.
REV. TABLET TYPE OF REGULAR 1853 TWENTY DOLLARS. NUMERAL 3 PUNCHED IN LATHE DESIGN ABOVE TABLET; NUMERALS 516 BELOW.
EDGE: REEDED. ..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 516 GRAINS (AS STAMPED UPON REVERSE). ORANGE-COLORED GOLD, HEAVILY ALLOYED WITH COPPER. THE NUMERAL "3" IS THOUGHT TO REPRESENT THE MONTH OF MARCH.

Silver Ty-126
(Gold 26)

SC-8

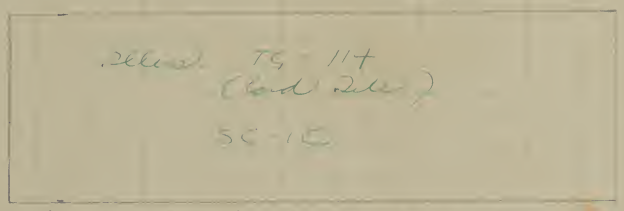
1853. 21.06 DOLLARS. TARGET OBVERSE TYPE. 900 THOUS.
OBV. SIMILAR TO THAT ON LAST, BUT FROM A DIFFERENT DIE. PERIOD AFTER THOUS. DIRECTLY OPPOSITE A POINT BETWEEN E R OF ASSAYER; PERIOD AFTER U. OF U.S. DIRECTLY ABOVE A POINT BETWEEN OL OF DOLS.
REV. TABLET TYPE FROM DIE IDENTICAL TO THAT UPON LAST. NUMERALS 540 PUNCHED INVERTED IN LATHE DESIGN BELOW TABLET.
EDGE: REEDED. ..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 540 GRAINS (AS STAMPED UPON REVERSE). ALMOST ORANGE-COLORED GOLD, ALLOYED WITH COPPER.

Silver Ty-128
(Gold 26)
SC-9
Stacks and Pittman

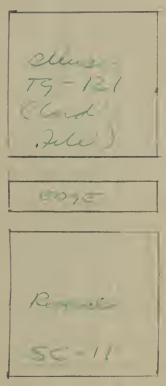
1853. 28.62 DOLLARS. TARGET OBVERSE TYPE. 999 THOUS.
OBV. IDENTICAL TO THAT ON THE $21.06 COUNTERPART.
REV. TABLET SUPERIMPOSED UPON WEAKLY IMPRESSED LARGE TARGET CENTER. NO UPSET BORDER OR RIMMING.
EDGE: REEDED. ..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 666 GRAINS.
FLAN CLIP AT BOTTOM RIGHT (OBV.), RIGHT SIDE (REV.), AS MADE. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS PIECE WAS MEANT TO BE OF THE DENOMINATION OF TWENTY DOLLARS, BUT THAT THE CLIPPED FLAN REDUCED THE WEIGHT (AND VALUE) TO THE PRESENT ODD AMOUNT.

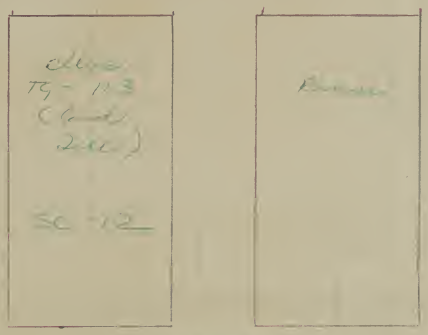
USA09-4

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO



1853. 50 DOLLARS. ROUND, FULL PLANCHET.
900 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED. ..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 1286.3 GRAINS. (STANDARD WGT.: 1290 GRAINS)
NUMERAL 0 OF 50 PUNCHED INTO OBVERSE DIE TWICE.





LOWER R. HAND CORNER STAMP

1853. 50 DOLLARS. ROUND, PIEDFORT PLANCHET (OF 5.25 MM).
900 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED. ..... 2 KNOWN
WEIGHTS, 1281.25, 1315.75 GRAINS. BOTH KNOWN SPECIMENS SILVER ALLOYED, THE GOLD LIGHT YELLOW IN HUE. STRUCK FROM THE IDENTICAL OBVERSE AND REVERSE DIES AS THE LAST. THE PLANCHET OF THE SAME DIAMETER AS THE REGULAR TWENTY DOLLARS BUT APPROXIMATELY TWO AND ONE HALF TIMES AS THICK. THE TWO EXAMPLES OF THIS TYPE AND THE SOLITARY SPECIMEN OF THE LAST, ARE THE ONLY FIFTY DOLLAR COIN INGOTS DATED 1853 KNOWN, AND REPRESENT THE FIRST [illegible] "QUINTUPLE EAGLES" ISSUED UNDER U.S. AUTHORITY.

1853. 200 DOLLARS. RECTANGULAR "QUADRUPLE SLUG" OR BAR.
900 THOUS. UNIFACE, THE REVERSE BLANK. EDGE: PLAIN.
..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 5162 GRAINS (AS STAMPED UPON OBVERSE). GREEN-COLORED GOLD, HEAVILY ALLOYED WITH SILVER. THE DIE STAMP LOCATED AT THE BASE OF THE OBVERSE CONTAINS THE INSCRIPTION A. HUMBERT / U.S. ASSAYER, AND IS UNPUBLISHED. IT IS REPEATED AT THE LOWER RIGHT HAND CORNER, BUT IS THERE HARDLY LEGIBLE AND INCOMPLETE. THE "EAGLE COIN DIE" IS THE SAME ONE USED FOR THE OBVERSES OF THE TWO ABOVE DESCRIBED ROUND FIFTY DOLLAR PIECES. A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE THREE TYPES REVEALS THAT THIS BAR PRECEDED THE ROUND FIFTY DOLLAR COIN INGOTS, AS EVIDENCED BY THE STATE OF THE MAIN DEVICE OF THE FORMER AND THE OBVERSES OF THE LATTER. THIS "QUADRUPLE SLUG" IS THE HIGHEST DENOMINATION ITEM BEARING THE STAMP OF THE UNITED STATES, INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION, THAT IS KNOWN TO HAVE SURVIVED. DOUBTLESS, COUNTLESS OTHERS FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE MELTING POT. IT IS [illegible] OPINION THAT THIS PIECE IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE AND INTEREST AND [illegible] EASILY BE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE PRIME U.S. GOLD RARITIES, IF NOT THE MOST [illegible] SINGLE EXAMINE IN THE ENTIRE FIELD OF AMERICAN NUMISMATICS.

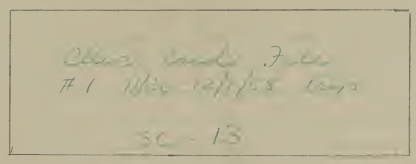
USA05-5

PROVISIONAL MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, SAN FRANCISCO

COIN DISK MINTAGE

THESE WERE A HUMBERT ISSUE, USED FOR CONVERSION OF RAW DUST, NUGGETS OR BULLION INTO A STANDARD MEDIUM, HAVING AN ACCEPTED MONETARY VALUE, WITHOUT A STATED DENOMINATION. THE DENOMINATIONAL VALUE OF THE COIN DISK WAS PREDICATED UPON A FLUCTUATING VALUE OF GOLD IN VARIOUS AREAS.

[illegible]
#1 [illegible]
SC-13



1853. 1 (OUNCE) COIN DISK. 900 (THOUS.).
PERIPHERAL BORDERS PLAIN; NOT UPSET OR MILLED.
EDGE: REEDED. ---------- UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 480 GRAINS (OR EXACTLY ONE TROY OUNCE). GREEN-COLORED GOLD, HEAVILY ALLOYED WITH SILVER. THE REVERSE OF THIS PIECE SHOWS THE SAME, WEAKLY IMPRESSED, LARGE TARGET CENTER, 7/8" IN DIAMETER, WHICH WAS USED AS AN UNDERTYPE ON THE REVERSE OF THE $28.62 COIN INGOT PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED. THE COIN DISK IDEA FOR A CIRCULATING MEDIUM (AS PROVEN BY THE COIN SHAPE AND REEDED EDGE), DID NOT GAIN WIDE ACCEPTANCE. HOWEVER, THE SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH MINT (WITH THE SAME EQUIPMENT AS HUMBERT, IN THE IDENTICAL EDIFICE), ISSUED DISKS, AS WELL AS INGOTS AND BARS, IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING 1853.

ASSAY CONVERSION INGOTS OR BARS

THE UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE OF GOLD CONVERTED, BOTH UPON REQUEST AND FOR THEIR OWN USE, RAW GOLD MAINLY IN THE FORM OF DUST INTO INGOTS AND BARS OF VARYING SIZE. SOMETIMES THESE REPRESENTED CHANGE FOR A DEPOSIT OF GOLD AGAINST TWENTY DOLLAR PIECES OR OTHER COIN; OTHER TIMES THEY WERE MADE TO SATISFY A CUSTOMER WHO WANTED HIS DUST REFINED INTO PURE GOLD. BARS OF EXCEPTIONAL SIZE WERE MADE FOR OVERLAND SHIPPING, THEIR BULK AND GREAT WEIGHT DISCOURAGING EXPRESS ROBBERS.

[illegible]
TG-127

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SC-14

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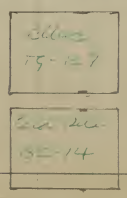
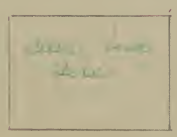
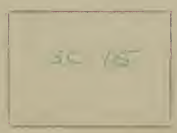
SC-15







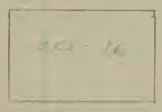
185(3) $7.26 CONVERSION BAR. 900 THOUS. ---- UNIQUE
WEIGHT 183.25 GRAINS. (STANDARD: $7.26 x 25.8 GRAINS OF 900/1000 GOLD PER DOLLAR, = 187.3 GRAINS. THE SILVER CONTENT AND VALUE OF THIS SMALL BAR MAKES UP THE DIFFERENCE.) THE OBVERSE DIE STAMP, WHILE SIMILAR, IS DIFFERENT THAN THAT ON THE TWO HUNDRED DOLLAR "QUADRUPLE SLUG." THE MEANING OF 71-15 2, UPON THE REVERSE, IS NOT KNOWN.

1853. 40 DOLLARS. CONVERSION BAR. 9999 (THOUS. ?).
NUMERAL 2 (VERTICALLY PUNCHED, BOTH SIDES), INDICATES WEIGHT IN OUNCES.
---------- UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 955.75 GRAINS. (WEIGHT CALLED FOR - I.E. $40. IN PURE GOLD SHOULD EQUAL 928.8 GRAINS, BASED UPON 232.2 GRAINS PURE GOLD IN EAGLE x 4.) ON THE OTHER HAND, 2 OUNCES = 960 GRAINS, WHICH, ALLOWING FOR WEAR AS EVIDENCED BY THE PIECE, WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ITS STRUCK WEIGHT.

USA05-6

PROOFING PIECES

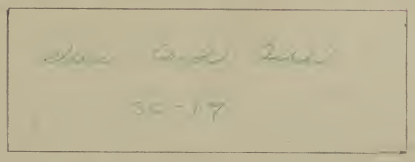
PROBABLY LESS IS KNOWN CONCERNING THIS SERIES THAN ANY OTHER PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE OF GOLD. THE FACT THAT AUGUSTUS HUMBERT "ARTIFIED" GOLD IS TESTIFIED TO BY THE EXISTENCE OF SEVERAL DIFFERENT, BUT SIMILAR, SMALL PROOFING INGOTS. IT IS SURMISED THAT THESE WERE USED TO "BRING UP" LOWER QUALITY MELTS. IN THE UNAVAILABILITY OF REFINING ACIDS FOR COMMERCIAL USE, PROOFING PIECES WOULD HAVE A REAL VALUE TO OTHER COINERS AND ASSAYERS, AS WELL AS TO CURTIS, PERRY & WARD WHEN REFINING ACIDS WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO ASSAYER HUMBERT. PROOFING PIECES ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR EVIDENT LACK OF CLEARLY INDICATED WEIGHT AS WELL AS THE OBVIOUS ABSENCE OF A DENOMINATION OR STATED VALUE IN DOLLARS.



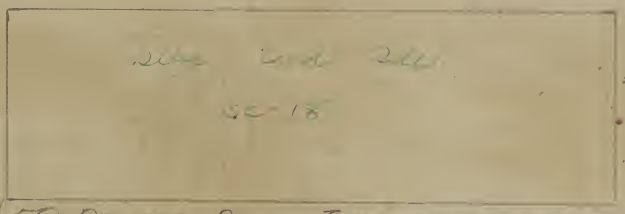
1853. PROOFING GOLD INGOT. 998 (THOUS.).
REV. NUMERALS 2-1 7-53 PUNCHED IN BELOW TARGET. ... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 440.20 GRAINS. THE OBVERSE DIE STAMP, A. HUMBERT / U. S. ASSAYER, IS IDENTICAL TO THAT ON THE $7.26 CONVERSION BAR EARLIER DESCRIBED. THE MEANING OF THE REVERSE NUMERALS IS LIKEWISE NOT KNOWN, ALTHOUGH 7-53 IS THOUGHT TO INDICATE "JULY, 1853."

PATTERNS IN GOLD

SAMPLES IN GOLD, ILLUSTRATING NEW IDEAS FOR COINAGE, ARE OF INORDINATE RARITY IN THE REGULAR U.S. PATTERN SERIES. THE SAME MAY BE SAID FOR GOLD PATTERNS OF THE UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE OF GOLD, EXAMPLES OF WHICH HAVE ONLY BEEN DISCOVERED WITHIN RECENT YEARS.



1853. 20 DOLLARS. OCTAGONAL PLANCHET.
900 THOUS. EDGE: PLAIN. ..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 421.25 GRAINS. (STANDARD: 900/1000 = 516 GRAINS; STANDARD: 1000 = 464.40 GRAINS.) THE PLANCHET FOR THIS PIECE WAS NOT STAMPED OUT, THE OCTAGONAL SHAPE HAVING BEEN HAND CLIPPED AFTER THE IMPRESSION WAS TAKEN UPON A VERY THIN ROLLED STRIP. THIS PIECE REPRESENTS A TRUE EXPERIMENTAL TRIAL, PERHAPS IN PURE GOLD. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE PIECES IN THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC FIELD, HAVING CHANGED HANDS FOR $22,500 [illegible]



(1853) 50 DOLLARS. ROUND. TARGET REVERSE WITHOUT LEGEND.
900 THOUS. EDGE: REEDED. ..... UNIQUE
WEIGHT, 1297.60 GRAINS. AN ESSAY BECAUSE OF THE INCOMPLETENESS OF THE REVERSE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE INTENT WAS TO INSERT MOFFAT & CO. AND THE DATE 1853 IN THE BLANK SPACE ABOVE AND BELOW THE TARGET CENTER. SUCH A PRESUMPTUOUS IDEA WOULD OF COURSE HAVE BEEN DENIED BY THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT, COMBINING AS IT DID, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA LEGEND UPON THE OBVERSE, AND THE IDENTIFYING NAME OF THE PRIVATE COINER UPON THE REVERSE.